



Don Quixote: Interdisciplinary Connections (Juan de La Cuesta-Hispanic Monographs. Series Documentaticio)

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This volume grew out of "Don Quixote: Study of a Modern Hero," a symposium held in 2012 at the University of Portland that gathered scholars from across the United States as well as Spain for invigorating conversation on the myriad ways of reading Cervantes's masterpiece in the twenty-first century. In ways both complementary and distinct, each chapter of the book demonstrates eloquently the ability of Don Quixote to prompt original, text-based readings connected to disciplines beyond what in the past might have been considered strictly Hispanic studies. This interdisciplinarity is even more noteworthy in light of the fact that all but one contributor to the work are Hispanists specializing to various degrees in the Spanish Golden Age. Informed by a desire to interpret the novel in ways not necessarily considered in previous studies, the essays show how Don Quixote as novel and character inspires connections with far-ranging fields such as psychology, film, graphic fiction, classical antiquity, contemporary youth theater, the law, cultural memory, gender studies, and ethnicity. The breadth of these connections testifies to the continued relevance of Don Quixote in a world that increasingly questions the importance of the humanities, because it is doubtful that any other novel, from any time period, lends itself to so many interpretations using such an apparently disparate variety of approaches. The volume is divided into four broad categories, each of which contains three chapters: "Cognitive Theories and Don Quixote," "Don Quixote as Superhero," "Don Quixote Today," and "Navigating Mind, Body, the Law, and Heterodoxy in Don Quixote." Even though Don Quixote is italicized in the titles of these section headings, the sections refer to Don Quixote as both novel and character in the novel. The essays in Part 1, "Cognitive Theories and Don Quixote," use Renaissance treatises on human nature as well as modern-day theories of embodiment, emotional contagion, and empathetic response in order to explain how Don Quixote, Sancho, and a host of secondary characters think about and engage one another. Part 2 of the volume, "Don Quixote as Superhero," testifies to the broad reach of Don Quixote and the eponymous hero of the text, whether in contemporary genres such as film and graphic fiction, or as a means of establishing connections with Augustan-era poetry and Renaissance painting. The chapters in Part 3, "Don Quixote Today," explore both the paradox of the iconic stature of the work, particularly in Spain, and the ways in which the novel serves as a teaching tool in endeavors such as documentary filmmaking, oral interviews between study abroad students and native Spaniards, and theatre performed by at-risk youth in Brazil. Part 4, "Navigating Mind, Body, the Law, and Multiethnicity in Don Quixote," demonstrates how the novel lends itself to wide-ranging analysis of topics that include societal anxiety regarding male sexual function during the early 1600s, the importance of contracts to romantic relationships, and the worldview of descendants of Jewish converts to Catholicism in post-1492 Spain. In sum, Don Quixote: Interdisciplinary Connections broadens the ways in which we think of Don Quixote today while showing the relevance of the novel as a means to understand how individuals form their own identities and relate to those of others. Accessible to both first-time readers of Don Quixote and established Cervantine scholars, the essays in the collection broaden the scope of Quixote studies through their innovative commentaries as well as the connections to themes beyond the novel that these commentaries establish.

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